MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

16 February 1972

10:00 a.m. *CONVENE, 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006*

ADMINISTRATION

1. Approval of Minutes of 19 January 1972 Meeting

2. Dates of Next Meetings: 14 March (2:00 pm) and 19 April 1972

SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS

1. General Services Administration

a. National Air and Space Museum, the Mall - Revised Design

b. National Zoological Park, Rock Creek Park - Renovations to Monkey House and Puma House

2. Department of Interior, National Park Service

a. Mall Master Plan-1972, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, architects

b. Constitution Gardens, the Mall, Constitution Avenue between 17th St. and the Lincoln Memorial - Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, architects

3. D. C. Government, Department of Economic Development

a. Old Georgetown Act

Appendix 1

b. Shipstead-Luce Act

(1) SL 72-31, 1776 F St., N.W. - Proposed Eight Story Office Building, Vlastimil Koubek, architect

(2) Appendix 2

LEGISLATION

H.R. 10751, 9/16/71, Mr. Saylor, 92nd Congress

To establish the Pennsylvania Avenue Bicentennial Development Corporation, to provide for the preparation and carrying out of a further development plan for certain areas between the White House and the Capitol, to further the purposes for which the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historical Site was designated, and for other purposes.

INTERVIEWS

11:00 1. *General Services Administration*

National Air and Space Museum

11:15 2. *Department of Interior, National Park Service*

a. *Mall Master Plan - 1972, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, architects*

b. *Constitution Gardens, the Mall, Constitution Avenue between 17th St. and the Lincoln Memorial - Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, architects*

11:30 3. *D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development*

SL 72-31, 1776 F St., N.W. - Eight story office Building, Vlastimil Koubek, architect

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
16 February 1972

Meeting convened at 10:30 a.m. at the Commission of Fine Arts offices at 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Members Present:	Hon. J. Carter Brown, Chairman Hon. Nicolas Arroyo Hon. Gordon Bunshaft Hon. Jane Dart Hon. Kevin Roche Hon. Chloethiel Woodard Smith Hon. Edward D. Stone, Jr.
Staff Present:	Mr. Charles H. Atherton, Secretary Mr. Donald B. Myer, Asst. Secretary Mr. William Bogan Mr. Jeffrey Carson Mr. J. L. Sibley Jennings, Jr. Miss Marylyn Shaw Miss Lynda Smith
National Capital Planning Commission Staff present:	Mr. Edward Hromanick Mr. David McKinnon

I. ADMINISTRATION

a. Minutes for January, approved.

b. Date for Next Meeting, Thursday, March 16th, 1972 at 10:00 a.m.

II. SUBMISSIONS and REVIEWS

a. General Services Administration, National Air and Space Museum, the Mall - Revised Design. The Assistant Secretary presented a model and several drawings showing the development of a scheme commended by the Commission at its January meeting. The architect, Gyo Obata, had done massing studies of a museum with four solid masonry blocks connected by three glass links. The Commission generally commented that the scheme had little to offer over the original volume study in January, and would require a great deal of refinement before it would be acceptable. Mrs. Dart said that the entrance mass was a solid when it should be a void; the Chairman stated that the tripartite effect of the structure failed to read to advantage and that the Independence Avenue facade met the ground in an awkward way. Mr. Bunshaft felt the model was misleading

as the glass would read dark and reflective rather than transparent, and the requisite structure would make the glass areas more interesting. Mr. Roche stated that the scheme was simply not far enough advanced to indicate its success. The Chairman suggested that the Commission invite the architect into discuss the design at this time.

III. INTERVIEW

a. General Services Administration, National Air and Space Museum, the Mall - revised design. The project was represented by the architect, Mr. Gyo Obata; the museum director, Mr. Michael Collins; and the G.S.A. coordinator, Mr. Joe Milano. The Chairman asked Mr. Obata to explain his scheme after expressing the Commission's appreciation for his efforts since the January meeting. Mr. Obata stated that the material for the building was to be marble-clad-concrete panels with a pink hue, showing the Commission a sample. This development was well received. Various members mentioned possible schemes for developing the design, including in-setting the end wall glass, expressing the structure around the concrete-marble panels and opening up the Independence Avenue facade, particularly at the entrance. The architect stated that the glass roofed areas of the museum would be supported on space frames. The architect agreed with the members that further studies of the scheme and detail development would give the scheme a chance to jell. Messrs. Collins and Obata agreed to return with studies in detail of this parte as soon as possible. The Chairman reaffirmed the Commission's January approval of the glass-linked multi-block scheme.

IV. SUBMISSIONS AND REVIEWS

a. Department of Interior, National Park Service, The Mall Master Plan and Constitution Gardens, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. Mr. Bunshaft absented himself from the room during discussion of these two projects.

1. The Mall Master Plan. The Secretary showed the Commission several large drawings representing the current thinking by the Park Service on the Mall. He stated the plan had several items still shown which had specifically been disapproved by the Commission in 1966 - including a visitor-bus terminal on the Fourteenth Street side of the Washington Monument and the closing of Seventh Street and Fifteenth Street. The Assistant Secretary pointed out a new freeway tunneling under the Lincoln Memorial and emerging as an open cut between the reflecting pool and the Tidal Basin. The Members indicated that they would like to have more time to look over material on the Mall and suggested a presentation of the Mall Master Plan at the March meeting with additional information on the existing conditions, the 1966 plan and all changes proposed. The Secretary indicated that such a detailed review would be arranged. Mrs. Smith suggested that supplementary information could be circulated to the members before the March meeting.

2. Constitution Gardens, the Mall, Constitution Avenue between the Lincoln Memorial and 17th Street on the site of the former Navy Munitions Building. The Assistant Secretary showed the Members several drawings and a model stating that the historical intent was to have this section of the Mall a green, wooded retreat from the formality of the Reflecting Pool and the scale of the remainder of the Mall. The design presented had a large serpentine lake, a series of landscaped berms, and a semi-submerged, visitor-center-restaurant-bus-terminal at the 17th Street end which was oriented diagonally with the Washington Monument. Various of the program requirements proposed included a holly garden, rowboats, ice rink, and bike rentals. During the discussion, the Commission moved around the model and also examined the McMillan Commission Mall Plan hanging in the hallway. Various members commented on the impropriety of the proposed scheme with its busily irregular lake, large paved areas and multitude of facilities. Mr. Stone stated that he found the scheme to be way over-programmed for the site. Other members concurred, further stating that the design was simply not of a high enough calibre for this location and out of character with what should be and has been historically intended for this part of the Mall. It was felt that this design was too inward-looking, turned its back on the city, and could be placed virtually anywhere. Furthermore, the need for a bus facility was questioned in view of the major bus routes along 14th Street. The Chairman suggested that representatives of the Park Service be called in to discuss the project.

V. INTERVIEW

a. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Constitution Gardens, the Mall, between the Reflecting Pool and Constitution Avenue, from the Lincoln Memorial to 17th Street. The National Park Service was represented by Mr. Jack Fish, and architects were represented by David Childs. Mr. Fish generally filled the Commission in on the history of the project and the desire by the Department of Interior to provide visitor facilities for the expected crowds during the Bicentennial Celebrations. Mr. Fish then introduced the consultant who talked in terms of the design features. Mrs. Smith asked Mr. Childs why this particular site had been selected and what alternatives were available. There was no absolutely clear answer to this question, but the representatives stated that such facilities were to be provided throughout the Mall and this site was particularly important because it was on the edge of the Mall, could serve the visitors to the Lincoln Memorial, and was newly vacant. It would be further convenient for year-round day and evening use by local residents. Mr. Roche asked why the facilities provided by Constitution Gardens could not be distributed throughout the Mall and the special recreation features located in the fifty odd acres south of the Reflecting Pool in West Potomac Park.

Mr. Fish said that the main reason this would be difficult is the requirement that 27 acres of this land are reserved for the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial which has not been designed nor specifically located. Messrs. Stone and Roche spoke for the Commission, saying that the site was over programmed, had too much irregular water, paving and architecture and was inappropriate for this site. The other members indicated their agreement of these points adding that a more green, natural park or garden concept would be in keeping with the monumentality of the area, and that generally dispersing the facilities would be more desirable from the point of overall Mall development. Exhibit A.

VI. SUBMISSIONS AND REVIEW

a. General Services Administration, the National Zoological Park, in Rock Creek Park, Faulkner, Fryer and Vanderpool, architects. The Secretary asked the Commission if they would like to discuss remodeling of the Monkey House and the Puma House at this meeting or at the next meeting in conjunction with the presentation of the Zoo Master Plan. The Chairman stated that it would be preferable to take all of these projects up at once, including an inspection trip to the Zoo. The matter was postponed until the March meeting.

b. D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development

1. Old Georgetown Act, appendix 1, approved. Exhibit B & C.

2. Shipstead-Luce Act

(a) Appendix 2, approved.

(b) SL 72-31, 1776 F St., N.W. - proposed eight story office building, Vlastimil Koubek, architect. The Secretary presented elevation drawings and a perspective of a multi-story masonry clad commercial office building to be located just north of the new American Institute of Architects Headquarters. The building with neat regular masonry facade panels was designed to give the maximum envelope for the site, and quietly to harmonize with the adjacent office buildings. The Commission felt that the innocuous structure would be appropriate for this site and approved the design. The Secretary said that details and material samples would be checked as selected by the architect. A scheduled interview with the architect was cancelled.

VIII. LEGISLATION, H.R. 10751, 9/16/71, Mr. Saylor, 92nd Congress

To Establish the Pennsylvania Avenue Bicentennial Development Corporation, to provide for the preparation and carrying out of a further development plan for certain areas between the White House and the Capitol, to further the purposes for which the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historical Site was designated, and for other purposes. The Secretary described the general

content of the proposed bill and the Chairman indicated some question of the ex-officio role that the Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts should play in the eventual Corporation. The bill stated that the Chairman would be a non-voting member. The Commission discussed this matter feeling that it would be best, indeed, for the Chairman to be in a position of interest in the Corporation without having to commit the Commission or compromise the review objectivety of the Fine Arts Commission with such a vote. The members gave their approval to the objectives of the bill.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

Charles H. Atherton
Secretary

February 23, 1972

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Commission of Fine Arts was happy to have the opportunity to view the plans for the Constitution Gardens design at our meeting on 16 February. We see this as an excellent occasion to complete longstanding plans for this important part of the Mall park system and in addition provide for the great number of people who are expected to visit the nation's Capital during the next few years. At the same time the Commission felt that the program needed reconsideration and that the design quality of this proposal was not sufficiently high. They therefore voted unanimously to withhold approval of the proposed design at this time.

The first objection was to the amount of construction that would have to take place to accommodate a program that the Commission felt was overburdened for the site in its relationship to the overall design of the monumental park area. As one of the members put it, the proposal should not provide this much presence on the Mall. The amount of masonry involved in the large plaza, and the heights and design of certain building elements adjoining it represent, the Commission felt, too much structure for that site. Models are deceptive in the vertical dimension. The construction will be visible from the mound of the Washington Monument, not to mention the top of it, as well as from the air, a view that is becoming increasingly important as a way in which the visitor to Washington first apprehends the plan of the Capital in its original totality.

The need for a bus facility at that location was questioned when the major bus routes are oriented along 14th Street, and when bus access across the bridges and into Constitution Avenue is generally so limited. The intensity of use of the Lincoln Memorial and its attendant need for visitors' facilities is an argument that applies equally well to a variety of areas within an equal radius of the Memorial.

In the design of the landscaping, the amount of water was questioned in its relationship and proximity to the Reflecting Pool and its general lack of relationship to the corresponding area thathe

Exhibit A.

south of the Pool. In general, the Commission felt that the design was too inward-looking, that it in effect turns its back on the rest of the city. As a self-contained entity, it could be located just about anywhere. The Commission is sympathetic to the need for breaking down the scale of the Mall and humanizing it into sub-spaces. It felt this proposal, however, was overdesigned.

The removal of the "temporary" buildings at long last provides a very alluring opportunity. The Commission's interest, however, is in the total planning of the Mall area as a whole. The temptation for an architect to over-program any individual portion of that plan must be guarded against. The dispersal of amenities into other areas such as the wooded area south of the Reflecting Pool and in Potomac Park and Hains Point should be the goal. The panel between the Reflecting Pool and Constitution Avenue should breathe easily and with dignity as part of an overall scheme, and enhance the experience of the monuments and of the city plan, with its increasingly precious provision of open green space.

The Commission next meets on March 16, and would be happy to go into this design in greater detail at that time.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mr. Rogers C.B. Morton
Secretary of the Interior
Department of Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

23 February, 1972

Mr. Leonard Garment
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Len:

I thought you might like for your files a copy of a letter that I have just written the Secretary of Interior, reflecting the unanimous views of the Commission of Fine Arts on the current design proposal for the Constitution Gardens.

You will see that the Commission is in no way opposed to developing that very inviting piece of territory, which must be considered as important a segment of American landscape as exists. Our hope is, however, to be able to jog the firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill into throwing their top minds in to this question. The Administration and the Capital deserve no less.

I personally am very excited by the prospect of having this area suitably developed in time for the Bicentennial. Let's hope that a redesign would cost less and gain us all more thanks from posterity, who'll have to live with it.

The Commission used up some of its capital with the press in making its meeting to review these plans an executive session. I for one feel that it's important to get something that everybody's behind, if possible, before the headlines. No?

Over at the National Gallery we have a Chinese architect. What this country needs is more Chinese clarinetists.

See you soon,

As ever,

J. Carter Brown,
Chairman

Exhibit A, part two.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON OLD GEORGETOWN APPLICATIONS — February 16, 1972

NO.	ADDRESS AND OWNER	PROJECT
OG 72-91	3216 M St., N.W. Thomas Horne	Steel frame awning canvas covered.
ACTION;	Issue permit. 1/26/72	
92	3259 M St., N.W. L. Hommedien	Steel pipe framed, canvas covered awning, 33' long, 2'9" long, 4'9" projection lower part 9' above sidewalk.
ACTION:	Issue permit. 1/26/72.	
93	1034 33d St., N.W. Mary Cairns	Sign 38"x32"
ACTION:	Do not issue permit. No objection to design, submit details ofbracket and indicate sign colors. 1/26/72.	
94	1200 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. National Bank of Washington	Installation of money dispensing unit.
ACTION:	Do not issue permit. No objection to concept provided mechanism door is raised above belt course, and belt course is continuous. Request resubmission. 1/26/72	
95	1251 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. Scott Shoe Corp.	Flat sign painted as building trim (bone) w/brown letters as building color. 2' high x 12' wide.
ACTION:	Issue permit. 1/26/72	
96	3304 R St., N.W. William C. Foster	Install concrete slab for air conditioning condensor in front of residence.
ACTION:	Issue permit for brick screen, not for ornamental concrete block screen. 1/26/72	
97	2001 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. John Faraclas	Furnish and install 1 d/f stencil cut aluminum face display 2'3"x6'0" letter openings to be backed up withwhite plexiglas to read Adams Ark Restaurant Parking bottom of sign to be 8'0" above grade.
ACTION:	Do not issue. Recommend vertical composition, see action 72-88. 1/26/72	
98	3604 Prospect St., N.W. Sam Bialek	Addition in rear house on four levels, basement, entertainment room, living room and bedroom.
ACTION:	Preliminary scheme approved. Submit material samples and working drawings as developed, prior to issuance of permit. 1/26/72	

Exhibit B.

NO.	ADDRESS AND OWNER	PROJECT
OG 72-99	1035 31st St., N.W. Yes, Inc.	Alterations to bldg.
ACTION: Issue permit. 1/26/72		
101	1034 33d St., N.W. Bicycle Rentals, Sales	Sign
ACTION: Issue permit. 2/9/72.		
102	3034 M St., N.W. Design International	Sign
ACTION: Issue permit. 2/9/72		
103	1332 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. Millicent Chatel	Sign
ACTION: Do not issue permit. Character of letters and curlicues unsuitable. Suggest using letters similar to adjacent tenants. Indicate material of sign and color. Submission must show exact location of sign in relation to windows, doors, height, etc. 2/9/72		
104	1524 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. Gersky T/A Tootsies	Sign
ACTION: Issue permit. 2/9/72		
107	1200 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. ACTION: Approved. 2/10/72	Money Dispensing Machine

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON SHIPSTEAD-LUCE ACT SUBMISSIONS February 16, 1972

NO.	ADDRESS AND OWNER	PROJECT
SL 72-32	205 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Al Stein Inc.	Change glass on side of window to U.S. plywood sandspray. Eliminate plaster wall of window at rear and move selling floor racks into where window is at present.

ACTION: Do not issue permit. Proposal is wholly out of character with buildings and surroundings. Use of plywood and artificial beams is not recommended. Sandblasting upper brick is not recommended. Suggest total restudy of facade treatment, such as painted brick first floor arches. Drawing submitted does not reflect accurate proportions of openings nor the relationship of the two separate buildings the store is composed of; relationship of the facade, projecting show windows, etc. to public space should be shown. 2/10/72

29 March 1972

Dear Mr. Nelson:

On March 22nd the Old Georgetown Board met with representatives of the proposed Burger Chef restaurant for 1220 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. At that meeting the Board indicated their disapproval of a facade scheme presented by Architect Arley J. Koran, A.I.A., with a two floor false front above a one floor restaurant. They also recommended against the commercial Williamsburg-look character of the design as not being authentic to either the Federal Period or any other period of Georgetown development. The Burger Chef representatives were advised that the Board would not encourage a particular style and would be amenable to either a Federal or Contemporary design, provided it was done with excellence.

Of particular concern to the Commission of Fine Arts would be achieving a design harmonizing with the streetscape of Wisconsin Avenue. This specifically may involve raising the one floor plus basement structure to respect the existing vicinity corniceline. The Board would encourage exploring the possibility of a zoning variance which would permit this two floor operation above grade without a basement. This would loose no increase in use or population over what is now possible.

The next meeting of the Board will be on April 5th, and we will be happy to consider the matter further at that time.

Sincerely yours,

Charles H. Atherton

Charles H. Atherton
Secretary

Mr. John R. Nelson
Chief, Permit Branch
D.C. Dept. of Economic Development
6th and H St., N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Exhibit C.